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Hasina sent back
to sub-jail
from hospital

UNB, Dhaka

Detained Awami League President Sheikh Hasina was sent back to the makeshift jail at the Jatiya Sangsads Bhaban complex yesterday after receiving treatment at the Square Hospital for a week.

Former premier Hasina who has been suffering from multiple health complications including problems in her ears and eyes was admitted to the Square Hospital for the second time on April 19.

Earlier, she had been admitted to the hospital on March 11 and discharged on March 30.

Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told news agency UNB that the former premier was sent

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SEISMIC SURVEY
Fire causes
damage in
Lawachhara

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI,
Moulvibazar

A fire during 3D seismic survey of Chevron Bangladesh yesterday burnt down forestry in a large area while explosions during the survey caused around 30 structures in the Lawachhara National Forest to develop cracks in the last two days.

Locals and forest department personnel doused the fire in an

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IMPACT OF HIGH FOOD, OIL PRICES

50pc higher trade deficit projected

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

year, the IMF projected in a report on Bangladesh's current economic situation released last week.

"The pressure on the balance of payments has intensified significantly and our current account balance is now negative for the first time in several years," Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam said in a letter to the IMF recently.

The high trade imbalance will also push the current account balance into deficit, which had around \$1 billion surplus in the last fiscal year, the IMF projected in a report on Bangladesh's current economic situation released last week.

On an average, Bangladesh's trade imbalance over the past decade has been around \$2-3 billion.

Bangladesh Bank sources agreed with the projection, saying the unusual higher trade imbalance could be due to rising import of highly priced rice, wheat and oil, and could be exacerbated by lowering exports.

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CNG three-wheeler, taxi fares hiked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two days after almost doubling of the price of compressed natural gas (CNG), the government yesterday raised fares for CNG-run autorickshaws to Tk 6 a km, non-air-conditioned taxis to Tk 8 and air-conditioned (AC) taxis to Tk 10.

The minimum fare for non-AC and AC taxis were doubled from Tk 15 and Tk 20 while the autorickshaws' minimum fare was raised to Tk 18 from Tk 13.50. The

previous fare for autorickshaws, non-AC taxis and AC taxis were Tk 5.50, Tk 6 and Tk 8.

However, the CNG-run buses would not be allowed to hike their fares.

Drivers of autorickshaws and taxis would have to hang a chart of fares in their vehicles until meter calibration is completed, ATMK Ismail, additional secretary of the communications ministry, told The Daily Star last night.

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Women and children of low income group scavenge through a ditch in Haalisahar of Chittagong for rice yesterday. Rotten relief rice was dumped there two days ago.

TOKEN HUNGER STRIKE
AL men asked
to observe it
strategically, not
to violate EPR

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League (AL) leadership yesterday verbally instructed leaders of the party's district units across the country to observe 'strategically' the earlier announced token hunger strike on April 29 for the release of detained party President Sheikh Hasina and

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Contract Signing Ceremony of TECHNICAL COLLABORATION, PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT & MACHINERY & CONSTRUCTION OF SHIPYARD



A Contract Signing Ceremony between MEGHNA SHIP BUILDERS & DOCKYARD LTD., Bangladesh (A Unit of Meghna Group of Industries) and STX CORPORATION/ STX HEAVY INDUSTRIES CO. LTD., Korea (One of the leading ship builders in the world) was held on 23 April 2008 at Meghna Group of Industries Head Office, Gulshan, Dhaka.

This will be the largest ship building facility of International Standard in Bangladesh.

Mr. Mohd. Jashim Uddin, Executive Director, Meghna Group of Industries and Mr. B. H. Sim, Director, STX Corporation signed the contract on behalf of their respective organization. Mr. Mostafa Kamal, Chairman & Managing Director, Meghna Group of Industries, Mr. W. G. Jang, Vice Chairman, Mr. Kim Hyun Kyu/ P.E, Executive Managing Director, STX Heavy Industries Co. Ltd., Mr. I. L. Park, Counsellor & Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of The Republic of Korea in Bangladesh and Mr. Hanil Kim, Resident Trade Representative Korea Trade Centre (KOTRA), Dhaka were also present on the occasion.



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NEW UNITY PROPOSAL
Saifur group for
Bhuiyan, Hannan,
Hafiz in BNP
standing body

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The pro-Saifur faction of BNP is pushing forward a new unity formula, urging its rival faction to accommodate Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Maj (retd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed and Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah in the standing committee of the party.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who is now mediating unification of the two rivals, yesterday discussed the proposal with Khandaker Delwar Hossain, the chairperson-appointed secretary general of the party, at the speaker's Jatiya Sangsads Bhaban office.

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Shakhat Liton

With a caretaker government working to prepare grounds for sustainable democracy through a fair election, political analysts feel that some recent developments appear to be major threats to holding a credible parliamentary election.

Irrked by the Election Commission's (EC) decision to invite only Saifur Rahman-led faction of BNP to an electoral reform talk, pro-Khaleda Zia faction of the party led by detained chairperson appointed General Secretary Khandaker Delwar Hossain, announced that it will not participate in the next parliamentary election under the incumbent EC.

SAIFUR-led faction is however ready to contest in the parliamentary election, which is supposed to be held by the year end according to the EC announced electoral roadmap the military backed caretaker government pledged to support-all-out.

In a latest development, top Awami League (AL) leaders also started saying that they will also not contest in the poll without the release of their detained chief Sheikh Hasina, as grassroots level leaders and workers of the party have been putting pressure on

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